

INTERVIEW WITH: Enid Johnson Supernaw and Vaydes Johnson
Brueck (Sisters)
INTERVIEWER: Suzi Montgomery
INTERVIEW NUMBER: One
DATE OF INTERVIEW: April 7, 1999
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: Vaydes' House in Kanab
SUBJECT OF INTERVIEW: Their time in Kanab and living in Johnson
Canyon and their experiences there
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SM: So, I'll start with you, Vaydes. And I guess we'll start this interview by talking a little bit about Johnson Canyon and being that you were there since you were a little girl, can you tell me a little bit about the history of Johnson Canyon?

VB: Well, it use to be called the Spring Canyon Ranch because it had so many springs in it, and my great-great-grandfather was one of the first settlers and so it was eventually named Johnson Canyon because of him. He and his brothers settled over there and he also began quite a few towns around in Southern Utah; Pintura, Enoch, Cedar City, Virgin and Hillsdale out by Bryce Junction - not the one by Colorado City, and let's see, what else? Anyway, he and his brothers had ranches there before anybody else did and eventually, why there was a town begun there and because the state highway went around that way, and so it was named Johnson. And as a child, I know they still had the post office there. There were many springs. Every home there had it's own spring. And then some enterprising soul decided that there was too much flooding, so he took his plow and widened the little creek that went down and so naturally floods widened it until we had the big wash that we have now, and it drained many of the springs. But I remember quite a few houses there and there was a post office and my father, when I was child, drove the mail between Kanab and Johnson.

SM: Wow.

VB: Was it once a week?



Strip.

SM: I see. For cattle purposes?

VB: Well, it was just part of Arizona and she wanted it kept.

SM: Uh huh. There was a problem with water there, though, wasn't there- on the Strip?

VB: Well, yes, but there is water there and the cattlemen from Utah used it. They still do.

ES: They still do.

SM: I see. I understood that a lot of wells in Fredonia were saltwater wells. When they drilled they got salt water around the border there and I was wondering...

VB: Alkaline. Uh huh, but they seem to be doing all right now.

SM: There was probably enough fresh water around there too.

VB: Uh huh. Right.

SM: That's interesting. So you were talking about your grandfather doing this?

VB: Uh huh.

SM: So he was a cattleman?

VB: Yes. He began the ranch where our cousin has it now, but he began the ranch we grew up.

And it was called "Sun Up Ranch." He liked the sunrises there. And my father, and his other son, Lamar, did some homesteading to add to the ranch and that's why we lived on a homestead until I was seven, before we moved to the main ranch.

SM: I see. Do you have anything right now you'd like to add Enid, about what you remember about Johnson Canyon and the history of it?

ES: Well, I know we lived up in the dry farm for a long time, in the homestead, and I guess I wasn't very old when we first went up there, but I remember it and what a good time we had up there. And of course we had relatives that would stop by frequently and it was a pretty well traveled highway for the times and so many people would stop by and get water, cause we had such good water. And then our dad raised a big garden, so everybody that stopped by went away with arm loads of produce and melons and what have you, apples. We had a big apple orchard and so we spent so many days picking up apples. (Laughter) That's the way our day started, picking up apples, and we dried them.

SM: Uh huh. What process did you use to dry them, while we're on the subject? How did you do that?

ES: Just put them out on a big scaffold out in the sunshine.

VB: Uh huh. And we raised cattle. And we had eighty acres of alfalfa. And it was a cattle ranch. I remember especially the roundups, don't you Enid?

ES: Uh huh. I'd made a note of that.

VB: All the local people met. The local ranchers met because we had, I guess, more room there and they cattle were all, you know, they'd find the cattle in the brush and they'd bring them

all into the ranch and then the local cattlemen would cut out their brand. And so that's where we had the roundups every year.

SM: I see. And what did your brand look like?

JJ - my father's brand.

VB: Well.

J - His father's brand & one used by present ranch owner, Sylvan Johnson.

ES: Let me tell about that. We also had a lot of sheep herders come by with their sheep and they used to have a lot of sheep in this area, but they don't anymore, cause I think they over-grazed it.

SM: Yeah, it kind of went from sheep, then to cattle.

ES: Well, they had both.

VB: We didn't have sheep over there.

ES: We didn't have sheep, but so many of the people would take them down to the Strip and then bring them back in the summer because they put them down there in the wintertime on their winter range and many of the sheep men used our corrals when they did the spring shearing of the winter coats.

SM: Right. Right.

ES: So they would always end up by giving us a lamb or two that wouldn't keep up with the herd.

SM: Oh. So Vaydes is drawing the branding symbol for your family.

VB: They had the same name so this is why they had this brand. I forget Uncle Lamar's brand at the time. Do you remember it?

ES: Gosh. I can't remember it now.

SM: So tell me in detail about a roundup. So all these guys would get all the cows from all over and bring them in and corral them into this one area on your ranch?

VB: Uh huh.

SM: And was it like a big festivity? Were you looking forward to it all the time?

VB: Heavens no, we were too busy.

SM: Really?

VB: It was hard work. And mother would usually cook for them wouldn't she?

ES: Uh huh, and the same way with wheat, when they would cut the wheat and the thrashers would come by.

VB: Rye we raised. Wasn't it rye?

ES: And wheat too. And then she would cook for all the threshers. Neighbors came in and came around.

VB: One man, we did a little farming too, but one man owned a thresher and he'd go around to